

to come from. However, the law would require that they consult with us and notify the subcommittee. And I can assure you that if they were to ask to take funds out of a program that is working and working well, such as the alternative development program in Colombia, we would object to such a request.

So it is very broad on where the money can come from. We have no assurances, I might add to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR), that they are even going to request this money at all. But if they do, we will be watching very carefully as to where it would come from and make sure it is the appropriate place.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I just want the gentleman to know I share the concerns of the chairman. I believe that we can have far greater impact in Colombia by investing in alternative livelihoods rather than forced eradication.

Mr. Speaker, I would be very reluctant to see funding for demobilization programs come at the expense of any alternative development programs, and I look forward to working with the chairman to ensure that this just does not happen.

I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR) for raising these concerns.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank each and every distinguished Member of the House who has spoken this morning on this legislation. Obviously, this is, appropriately so, a tremendous amount, really a consensus, which is pleasing to see support for what we are doing as a Congress and as a government, as a Nation in this legislation.

I want to take one final moment, if I may, to explain a point that I made in response to a question to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) when I said that it is my belief that the Government of Venezuela is a dictatorship.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak a second or a minute to explain why. Democracy, in order for it to exist, requires two fundamental pillars or legitimacies; the legitimacy of origin, which is obtained through free and fair elections, and the Government of Venezuela was elected. So it obviously had the legitimacy of origin.

But then I believe that for a government to be democratic, it has to have another form of legitimacy, which is legitimacy in its conduct in the process of governing. And if a government, even if democratically elected, represses the opposition, persecutes the opposition, represses the press, for example the free press, in my view, it loses that other legitimacy which is required, the legitimacy of conduct for a democracy to be a democracy.

Mr. Speaker, so I am convinced that the Government of Venezuela has lost its democratic legitimacy, and it is not a democracy. So I appreciate the opportunity to explain why I believe, as I stated before, that it is at this moment a dictatorship.

I thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) for his extraordinary work once again in bringing forward this legislation. He is one of the people that I greatly admire in this House.

□ 1000

I urge all of our colleagues to support what we are doing, the very important step we are taking for our foreign policy interests and great humanitarian causes today in this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include tabular and extraneous material on the conference report to accompany H.R. 3057.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

#### CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3057, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 532, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 3057) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 532, the conference report is considered read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of November 2, 2005, at page H9499.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased this morning to be able to bring before my colleagues in the House of Representatives the fiscal year 2006 Foreign Operations Appropriations Conference Report for the bill H.R. 3057.

There is no doubt that the conferees had a difficult challenge this year,

working with an overall funding allocation that is almost \$2 billion below the fiscal year 2006 request. This is nearly 10 percent less than the President asked for. Nonetheless, the conferees took on the challenge of making the hard choices necessary to meet budgetary realities while funding this country's top foreign policy priorities at responsible levels, levels that fulfill our foreign policy objectives.

The conference report continues strong and active oversight of the expenditure of taxpayers' dollars consistent with the mandate given to us by the United States taxpayers and the leadership of this committee and the Congress.

The conference report continues the Appropriations Committee's pursuit of accountability for the expenditure of tax dollars, in particular our foreign assistance program expenditures. The oversight of our primary agencies—State Department, Treasury Department and USAID—includes quarterly reporting of expenditures, consultation on major programmatic changes and limitation on expenditures until conditions on congressional notifications are met.

The conference agreement also establishes for the first time an independent inspector general for the Export Import Bank.

That, Mr. Speaker, is a very quick summary of the bill. Let me turn now to some of the highlights that are contained in the conference report.

First, with regard to overall funding, the fiscal year 2006 budget request for the foreign operations account or appropriations bill was \$22.8 billion. As I already mentioned, the conference report funds our foreign assistance portfolio at \$20.9 billion; \$1.9 billion below what the President had asked for but \$1.4 billion over the fiscal year 2005 conference agreement.

Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. The conference report includes \$2.8 million for the third year of the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Here we are actually above the President's request by \$268 million. This number is \$629 million over the fiscal year 2005 level.

The conference report includes not less than \$450 million, twice the amount requested by the President, for the U.S. contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation, or MCC. This agreement funds the MCC at \$1.77 billion, \$270 million or 18 percent above the \$1.5 billion provided in fiscal year 2005. We are, however, and this needs to be noted, significantly below the \$3 billion requested by the President for this year.

Mr. Speaker, I happen to be a strong supporter of the Millennium Challenge Corporation. I was there when the President announced the idea for it. I helped draft the legislation which ultimately ended up in our bill. I am a big believer in this new concept of delivering foreign assistance. But we did